I: Karsten--252-253 (1916-18) 1935 Jivaro-1
116, 888 (1928-29)

"The position of old people, and more particularly of old men, is of special interest. How the power of a man increases with age appears nowhere more clearly than in the Jibaro society. We have frequently noticed that at the great feasts the ceremonies are always conducted by some old man or woman (generally called whuéa and ohúha) who, for instance, have to administer the juice of tobacco and other medicines taken on these occasions. The great victory feast, described in the next part of this work, will give us further instances of it. It is difficult to define more closely the true nature of the 'power' which, according to Indian belief, is increased in man with increasing age, and which explains the respect paid to old people and especially to old men. It is natural that, owing to their experience of life, they represent the wisdom of the tribe, just as they are the sole authorities on religion as well as on [253] custom. But 'experience' to the Indian means something more than to civilized man; it means mysterious magical or supernatural power. Every action of an old person, experienced in a particular sphere of activity, has therefore special emphasis, and every important rite or ceremony at a feast must consequently be performed by such aged persons, specially elected for the purpose. Even if an old man is not a professional medicine-man he is, according to Indian views, always more or less versed in magic. This to him means social influence and authority, or at any rate secures for him respectful treatment, although he may be physically decrepit and unable to work. Thus both the Jibaros and the Canelos

Indians believe that old men may, after death or even in their lifetime, appear in the shape of jaguars, anacondas, or other formidable or dangerous animals and in this disguise punish their relatives for neglect of duty. --The peculiar view that the Jibaros have about old men will be referred to again in connection with their war chiefs."

34:Harner E-4, 5 (1956-1969)1973 SD9 Jivaro SD9

554 While the concept of the *untsi* ideally encompasses all of
• 888 the characteristics described, it is possible to acquire the
778 designation with no formal qualifications other than sim-
789 ply having lived long enough to exhibit a few gray hairs
756 and to have many grandchildren. Such an achievement receives respect as a sign of supernatural power, and an elderly *untsi* of this sort is believed to have the ability to curse to death anyone who incurs his anger. No other kind of person is considered to possess this ability. Partly out of fear of being cursed, young men in the neighborhood assist him in land clearing and other tasks when he requests their aid.
[701] While the elderly *untsi*'s opinion is normally respected, he usually is not a real leader unless he is also outstanding as a killer, shaman, or good host. Thus the true "big men" are distinguished not only by longevity but by real leadership and generosity.

Kakaram, *the "Powerful Ones"*

554 Given such factors as the absence of any formal political
756 organization and even of unilineal descent groups, as well
701 as the pervasive belief in shamanistically induced illness and death, the conflict over women, and the emphasis on retaliatory sanctions and feuding, it should not be unexpected that the leaders in Jivaro society are outstanding killers and shamans. Although such leadership is informal, almost all neighborhoods have at least one or two *untsi* killers and a few superior shamans who are valued as protectors of their neighboring relatives, or at least of those with whom they are on friendly terms. Such leadership roles are earned and, in the case of the killers, acquired literally through life-and-death struggle.